

A Route for Ideas More than goods traveled the road. New ideas did, too. For example, missionaries from India traveled to China along a section of the road and brought the religion of Buddhism with them. By the time the Han dynasty ended, Buddhism was becoming a major religion in China.

Old Traditions, New Accomplishments

Traditional Chinese ideas flourished during the Han dynasty. Han rulers realized that during troubled times in the past, people had lost respect for tradition. To bring back this respect, rulers encouraged people to return to the teachings of Confucius. It is also why rulers during the Han and later dynasties required members of the civil service to be educated in Confucian teachings.

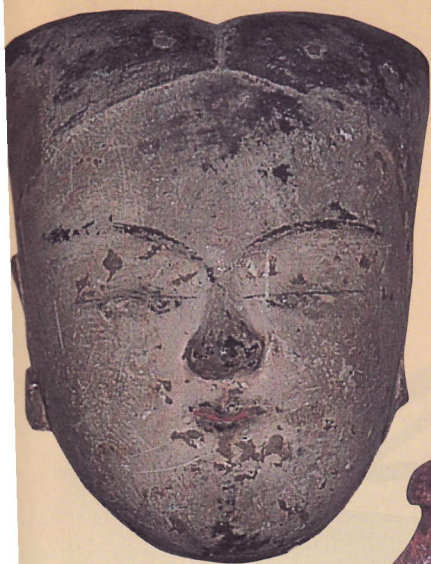
Language and Literature Under the Han dynasty, the arts and scholarship flourished. Chinese poets wrote excellent poetry. Chinese scholars put together the first dictionary of the Chinese language. But the greatest advance was in the field of history.

Until the time of the Han, the Chinese people had only a shadowy knowledge of their own history. They knew only myths that had been passed down from generation to generation. But often these stories were in conflict with each other. No one was sure just when Chinese rulers had lived or what they accomplished.



Predict Why would Han dynasty rulers want to bring back Confucian ideas of respect for authority and tradition?

Han Fine Art



The ceramic head (left) was made during the Han dynasty. The jade carving (below) of a winged beast is also from the Han dynasty. To the Chinese, jade is symbolic of purity and excellence.

